THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI AJIT PANJA): (a) The number of newspapers on the live register of the Registrar of Newspapers for India as on 31-12-1987 was 23,616.

(b) The number of newspapers taking newsprint varies from year to year. As many as 2,613 newspapers received newsprint during 1986-87 2,834 newspapers/journals were issued advertisements during the year 1986-87.

(c) Newsprint is allocated to the newspapers as per the Newsprint Allocation Policy announced by Government from time to time. The current Newsprint Allocation Policy was announced on 13-11-86 and a copy of the same was laid on the table of the Rajya Sabha on 17-11-86. All those newspapers journals which apply for Government advertisements and fulfil the norms prescribed by the Government and accept the rates offered are empanelled for release of Government advertisements.

Vegetable scandal in Super Bazer

3735 SHRI RAJNI RANJAN SAHU: Will the Minister of FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES be pleased to refer to Unstarred Question 2079 given in the Rajya Sabha on the 27th November, 1987 and state:

(a) what are the names and designations of officials of the Super Bazar involved in the vegetable scandal;

(b) the details of action taken against them; and

(c) if the reply to part (b) above be in the negative what are the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES (SHRI H.K.L. BHAGAT): (a) to (c) The Super Bazer has reported that the name of the officer involved in the scandal is Shri Laxman Singh who was then Senior Supervisor Fruits and Vegetable Department. He has since been transferred from the Department and disciplinary action is being initiated against him.

3736 [*Transferred to the 10th December 1987*]

Harmful use of chemical fertilisers

3737. SHRI RAM AWADHESH SINGH Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether excessive use of chemical fertilisers is proving counter-productive, and if so, what are the details thereof and corrective steps taken or proposed to be taken in this regard;

(b) whether Government propose to encourage the use of bio-organic fertilisers and bio-fertilisers; and

(c) whether genetic bio-fertilisers are already in use in USA/USSR etc. if so, what are the reasons for slow progress made by India in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND COOPERATION IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI YOGENDRA MAKWANA): (a) The present level of fertiliser consumption in the country is not excessive.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) Bio-fertilisers are soil and crop specific biological sources of nitrogen fixation and do not have universal application. As in USA and USSR, India also has made progress in the development of efficient strains of Rhizobium and Blue Green Algae cultures. To promote use of biofertilisers among farmers, a national project on the development and use of bio-fertiliser has been sanctioned.